

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of connecting businesses through common interests comprising:
storing business profiles comprising business attributes in an online business registry;
responsive to a query from an inquiring business, searching said online business registry to locate at least one business having a business profile including at least one business attribute corresponding to said query; and
establishing at least one communications link between said inquiring business and said located business according to at least one business attribute of said business profile of said located business.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said searching step comprises searching said online business registry according to said query, wherein said specified business attribute is common to said inquiring business.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said storing step comprises storing business attributes selected from the group consisting of business identity information, business description information, and communications information.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein said establishing a communications link step comprises extracting said communications information from said business profile of said located business.
5. The method according to claim 3, wherein said storing step further comprises:
defining access rights to said business profiles;
defining permissible communications links and points of contact as business attributes within said business profiles; and
defining selected business attributes of said business profiles as private.

1 6. The method of claim 3, wherein said establishing a communications link step
2 further comprises authenticating at least said inquiring business.

1 7. A method of connecting businesses through common interests comprising:
2 storing business profiles comprising business attributes in an online business
3 registry;
4 responsive to a query from an inquiring business specifying at least one
5 business attribute, locating within said online business registry business profiles
6 corresponding to said specified business attribute;
7 identifying within said located business profiles references to other business
8 profiles contained within said online business registry; and
9 determining whether said other business profiles include business attributes
10 corresponding to said query.

1 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
2 if so, establishing a communications link between said inquiring business and at
3 least one of said other businesses having a business attribute corresponding to said
4 query.

1 9. The method of claim 7, wherein said locating step locates within said online
2 business registry business profiles corresponding to said specified business attribute,
3 wherein said specified business attribute is a business identity.

1 10. The method of claim 7, wherein said locating step comprises locating in said
2 online business registry, business profiles associated with said specified business
3 attribute of said query, wherein said specified business attribute is common to said
4 inquiring business.

1 11. The method of claim 7, wherein said storing step comprises storing business
2 attributes selected from the group consisting of business identity information, business
3 description information, and communications information.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein said establishing a communications link step
2 comprises extracting said communications information from said business profile of at
3 least one of said other businesses.

1 13. The method according to claim 11, wherein said storing step further comprises:
2 defining access rights to said business profiles;
3 defining permissible communications links and points of contact as business
4 attributes within said business profiles; and
5 defining selected business attributes of said business profiles as private.

1 14. The method of claim 11, wherein said establishing a communications link step
2 further comprises authenticating at least said inquiring business.

1 15. A system for connecting businesses through business profiles comprising:
2 an online business registry configured to store business profiles comprising
3 business attributes;
4 a registration application configured to collect said business attributes of said
5 business profiles and store said business profiles within said online business registry;
6 a search engine configured to receive queries and search said business profiles
7 to locate at least one other business profile corresponding to said query; and
8 a communications engine configured to establish a communications link between
9 at least two businesses having profiles included in said online business registry, said
10 communications link being established according to at least one business parameter
11 within at least one of said business profiles associated with said at least two
12 businesses.

1 16. A machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having
2 a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine for causing the
3 machine to perform the steps of:

4 storing business profiles comprising business attributes in an online business
5 registry;

6 responsive to a query from an inquiring business, searching said online business
7 registry to locate at least one business having a business profile including at least one
8 business attribute corresponding to said query; and

9 establishing at least one communications link between said inquiring business
10 and said located business according to at least one business attribute of said business
11 profile of said located business.

12 17. The machine-readable storage of claim 16, wherein said searching step
13 comprises searching said online business registry according to said query, wherein said
14 specified business attribute is common to said inquiring business.

15 18. The machine-readable storage of claim 16, wherein said storing step comprises
16 storing business attributes selected from the group consisting of business identity
17 information, business description information, and communications information.

18 19. The machine-readable storage of claim 18, wherein said establishing a
19 communications link step comprises extracting said communications information from
20 said business profile of said located business.

21 20. The machine-readable storage according to claim 18, wherein said storing step
22 further comprises:

23 defining access rights to said business profiles;

24 defining permissible communications links and points of contact as business

5 attributes within said business profiles; and
6 defining selected business attributes of said business profiles as private.

1 21. The machine-readable storage of claim 18, wherein said establishing a
2 communications link step further comprises authenticating at least said inquiring
3 business.

1 22. A machine-readable storage, having stored thereon a computer program having
2 a plurality of code sections executable by a machine for causing the machine to
3 perform the steps of:

4 storing business profiles comprising business attributes in an online business
5 registry;

6 responsive to a query from an inquiring business specifying at least one
7 business attribute, locating within said online business registry business profiles
8 corresponding to said specified business attribute;

9 identifying within said located business profiles references to other business
10 profiles contained within said online business registry; and

11 determining whether said other business profiles include business attributes
12 corresponding to said query.

1 23. The machine-readable storage of claim 22, further comprising:
2 if so, establishing a communications link between said inquiring business and at
3 least one of said other businesses having a business attribute corresponding to said
4 query.

1 24. The machine-readable storage of claim 22, wherein said locating step locates
2 within said online business registry business profiles corresponding to said specified
3 business attribute, wherein said specified business attribute is a business identity.

1 25. The machine-readable storage of claim 22, wherein said locating step comprises
2 locating in said online business registry business profiles associated with said specified
3 business attribute of said query, wherein said specified business attribute is common to
4 said inquiring business.

1 26. The machine-readable storage of claim 22, wherein said storing step comprises
2 storing business attributes selected from the group consisting of business identity
3 information, business description information, and communications information.

1 27. The machine-readable storage of claim 26, wherein said establishing a
2 communications link step comprises extracting said communications information from
3 said business profile of at least one of said other businesses.

1 28. The machine-readable storage according to claim 26, wherein said storing step
2 further comprises:

- 3 defining access rights to said business profiles;
4 defining permissible communications links and points of contact as business
5 attributes within said business profiles; and
6 defining selected business attributes of said business profiles as private.

1 29. The machine-readable storage of claim 26, wherein said establishing a
2 communications link step further comprises authenticating at least said inquiring
3 business.